

From the Lake Shores

Connors Lake • Lake of the Pines

LAKE ASSOCIATION



SPRING

WATERS | VOLUNTEERS | FISH | FORESTRY

"Preserving and protecting our lakes for today and for future generations."

a newsletter for the Lake Association Members • Volume 36 - May 2024

Words from the President

Hello Spring! The forest is waking up and Summer will be right behind. It is so nice to get up in the morning and hear the birds, look out on the lake to see the loons, and listen to the forest coming to life again! It's been a crazy winter with not much snow, and I can't remember the last time that we had ice on and off numerous times. Not to mention open water and boats on the lakes in December! Many of us had to take a break this year from our normal winter activities. We did get to ice fish a little, but snowmobiling was not happening this year.

Your Board of Directors got some things done in 2023. There is new sand being put on Connors beach area, the walking trail is on Lake of the Pines, some benches were replaced on Connors, and we got new signage for Connors Creek to protect the walleyes during the spawn. The main project for the summer this year is to treat and halt the Milfoil growth on Connors Lake. We discovered this new fast-growing Milfoil that is located by the boat landing. If it goes untreated it will spread quickly in the shallow areas on Connors and possibly even spread to Lake of the Pines. So, this will be mine and the Board of Directors top mission this year and all other projects will be on hold until we can stop the spread of Milfoil. The treatment for Milfoil is very costly and will be an ongoing expense to the Lake Association, but we did get a grant! We will be updating you with the monthly Report from the North, so watch your email.



We have some board positions opening this fall and the voting will take place at the Fall meeting (Labor Day weekend). If you would like to become a board member, please contact me or any other Board Member. We also need volunteers in many areas.

Rumor has it that my wife (Gloria) is going to organize a boat parade on July 6th at 7pm! Look for posters hanging up in local establishments and in the monthly Report from the North for more information! We could even have a social gathering in the middle of the lake after the parade!

We hope you have a great Summer and enjoy the beautiful Northwoods!

Steven Lindahl

Steven Lindahl
President

Summer Events

This is a short list that you can have on hand throughout the summer. There are many more events in the area, at the businesses, and the ATV clubs put on specialty runs all summer/fall.

Cable Natural History Museum has many events throughout the summer. You can go to their website and print off the 2024 Summer Calendar of Events www.cablemuseum.org. They have a new exhibit opening on May 25 called Anaamaagon: Under the Snow and the same day you can shop at their Pollinator & Native Plant Sale. There are so many events at the museum that everyone in the family will find something to interest them!

Oxbo Resort's **Tic Races** on May 18.

General Meeting May 25 at Big Bear Lodge

Lumbermen's Day in Catawba is on June 7 & 8.

Czech Fest in Phillips June 14 & 15.

Tractor Pull in Kennan on Saturday June 29.

4th of July Celebrations in Phillips from July 4th through July 7th.

Music in the Park in Phillips: July 4 (Hip Pocket), July 11 (1st Hand Pie), July 18 (Dave Steffen Band), July 25 (Iron Mule), August 1 (The Jimmies), and August 8 (Downtown Acoustic Band).

Flambeau Rama in Park Falls August 2 through 4.

Phillips on Tap on August 17

Price County Fair August 22 through the 25.

Prentice Progress Days August 31

General Meeting at Big Bear Lodge August 31. Important voting is happening at this meeting!

2024 Elections

These are the positions that are being voted on at the Fall General Meeting

(August 31 at Big Bear Lodge): President, Vice President, and 2 Members At Large.

Please let us know if you or someone you know would like to run for any of these offices.



Happe Family Photos

Aquatic Invasive Species Report – Spring 2024

Cynthia Aigner

Good news! I am delighted to report that our lake association was awarded a \$10,000 Surface Water Grant from the DNR. This grant will be used to write our new Aquatic Plant Management Plan (APM), which we need in order to apply for a permit to treat the milfoil in the northwest bay of Connors Lake by the boat landing. In 2023, the board made the decision to treat this one area of the lake because of its proximity to the boat landing.

The grant also will be used to pay for lake surveys for both lakes for the next 3 years. The grant does not pay for treating the milfoil in Connors Lake. That will be covered by the lake association and a possible grant in the future. The cost to treat is approximately \$5,000. The 2.5 acres of lake will be treated with ProcellaCOR (Florpyrauxifen-benzyl). The lake area to be treated is approximately 1/2 of 1% of the total lake surface area of Connors Lake.

Let's return to the APM plan. We contract with a consultant to write this plan. She met with board members in early April. The consultant will also be meeting with lake association members and other interested community members to obtain an understanding of how we view our lakes and what we want for them in the future. The meeting date and location will be posted as soon as we have this arranged, mostly likely in mid-June.

More about our grant. Our total estimate of the project is \$15,000. The grant pays 66% of the cost, or \$10,000. The DNR will give us an advance payment of \$7,500 with the remainder to be paid after the completion of the project in 2026. The board will be responsible for paying the cost of the milfoil treatment for the northwest bay, including the necessary permits and other fees.

As you can tell, we have been busy working on this project and believe the pieces are all in place to ensure the health of our lakes.



Eurasian Watermilfoil



ATV/UTV Riders: Ride Safe On Public And Private Lands

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) urges youth users of recreational vehicles and their parents to operate responsibly, including on private lands.

Fatal crashes happen on private lands each year, with one fatal UTV crash on private property already in 2024 and six ATV/UTV fatal crashes on private property in 2023.

Over the last five years, 70% of fatal crashes involving operators or passengers under the age of 18 took place on private lands. Lack of helmets, not using seatbelts in UTVs and inexperience are among the top factors in these crashes.

“Parents and guardians need to stay alert and teach children to ride responsibly by making sure they wear helmets and seatbelts, take an ATV safety course and get mentorship from an experienced adult,” said Lt. Warden Jacob Holsclaw, DNR Off-Highway Vehicle Administrator.

The same guidelines for helmet and seatbelt use also apply to adults.

Wisconsin law requires ATV and UTV operators born on or after Jan. 1, 1988, who are at least 12 years old for an ATV (and at least 16 years old for UTV) to complete a safety certification course if riding on public lands, roads, or another person’s property with permission. Courses can be taken online or in person. A list of approved safety education classes is available on the DNR Safety Education webpage.

Youth riders are not required to complete an ATV safety course if riding on property owned by their immediate family, but it’s a good idea to still take one.

Here are a few more safety tips to keep in mind when operating your off-highway vehicles:

- Remember, no ice is 100% safe. Warmer than usual winter temperatures have created hazardous ice conditions, and extra caution is necessary.
- Never consume alcohol or drugs before or during your ride.
- Always wear a DOT-approved helmet.
- Always wear a seatbelt in a UTV.
- Do not travel in unfamiliar areas.
- Let someone not riding with you know where you are going and when you will return.
- Follow all posted speed limits and regulatory signs.
- Double-check before operating on trails.

Wisconsin law requires every operator involved in a crash incident to report the incident to law enforcement officials without delay. Operators must submit a written report to the DNR within 10 days of the incident. For more information about ATV and UTV recreation in Wisconsin, visit the DNR’s ATV/UTV Riding in Wisconsin webpage.

From: Eat WI Fish website

Microwaved Fish

Quick ... easy ... nutritious! Steam your fish fillet to perfection in a microwave on those busy days when you come home hungry and the fish might be frozen.

Ingredients

- 2 lake whitefish fillets or other fish (about 6-8 oz each)
- 1 lemon
- salt and pepper to taste.
- herbs to taste (tarragon and chives work nicely)
- 1-2 tsp liquid (this could be water, white wine, milk, citrus juice, or another fish-friendly liquid)
- edible flowers for garnish (find an edible flower list on the What's Cooking America website)

Method

1. Place the fillets in a microwave-safe dish. (Skin side down if the fillets still have skin.)
2. Season as desired. (Salt, pepper, a squirt of lemon, herbs and so forth.)
3. Add a teaspoon of liquid to keep the fish moist.
4. Cover the dish with a microwave-safe lid or microwavable plastic wrap.
5. Poke a small hole in the wrap to let a bit of steam escape.
6. Microwave your fish for about 3 minutes. Cooking time depends on your microwave and the fish. See below.
7. Cool for a minute or two in the microwave before removing so you don't burn yourself.
8. Garnish with additional herbs, lemon slices and flowers.

For a speedy taco, add chili powder, chopped cilantro and lime juice to the cooked fish and serve with other taco fixings.

About Cooking Times

- Know your microwave. Fish microwaved in a higher-wattage oven (650 or more watts) will take roughly a third less time than in a lower-wattage oven.
- In a higher-wattage oven, four thawed 1/2-inch-thick fish fillets will cook in about 3 minutes; one-inch-thick salmon steaks will take 1-2 minutes longer.
- To microwave frozen fish fillets, add a minute to the cooking time.
- If the fish fillets are much thicker in the center, fold the thin ends under to create a uniform thickness.
- If the fish isn't opaque by the end of the original cooking time, keep microwaving in 30-second increments until done.
- Be conservative with your cooking time. There is no uncook setting!

Tales from Connors Lake of Bats and Brooms

Cynthia Aigner

A long, long time ago, when I was about 5 years old, a huge grouse flew through the screen and landed on the floor of our Connors Lake cabin porch. It wasn't dead and began flapping around. My mom grabbed the yellow broom and she and the grouse danced around the porch until the bird gave up and died. It was the funniest thing I had ever seen (remember my age). Later that night, we had chicken and grouse for dinner. It was deliciously funny!

A long, long time ago, when I was about 6 years old, I was at the cabin with my mom, grandma, and aunt Myrt for a week's vacation. It was evening and I saw a bear lurking around the back of the cabin looking in the cabin windows. I told them and my aunt Myrt, being the matriarch and protector of the family, grabbed the same yellow broom mom had danced with. Yelling, she ran outside and chased the bear away. My dad didn't believe the story until later that week he saw the bear prints on the back wall of the cabin by the windows.

A long, long time ago, when I was about 8 years old, I carried a Red Rider BB gun with me where ever I went. One day Mr. Sanger, who lived on Old Lodge Lane, asked me to shoot bats in his attic. He offered 25 cents per bat. The attic was very tiny and very, very hot up there. I made some money that day and then spent it at Connors Lake Lodge on the way back from climbing the tower. (I did not take my BB gun UP the tower.) I was proud of earning my own money, but I made the career decision never to be a "bat hunter" again. Who knew — what I really wanted to be was the Aquatic Invasive Species Chairperson on a lake board somewhere in northern Wisconsin....



The Majestic Bald Eagle

Sarah Belson Happe

The bald eagle has been the national bird of the United States since 1782. It personifies strength, majesty and independence. Have you ever wondered why it is named “bald eagle” when clearly, they aren’t bald? Their name comes from an old English word, “balde”, meaning “white”.



Their white head and tail feathers make them easy to identify when they are soaring over the lake or woods or perched on a tree branch. Bald eagles attain adult plumage and yellow eye/beak color by around five years old. Before they get their white feathers, they are often mistaken for golden eagles. One theory behind juvenile bald eagle coloration is that being visually distinct from adults minimizes interspecies conflict, as adults are less likely to view young eagles as competitors. They can be found throughout the United States, Canada and northern Mexico. The largest eagles are found in Alaska. Eagles weigh between approximately nine pounds to 13 pounds, with females being larger than males. They are found most commonly near bodies of

water because they like to feed on fish. Besides fish, they hunt waterfowl, and small mammals like rabbits and squirrels. In the north, diets shift in late fall/winter to largely scavenging on deer carcasses and gut piles while fish is unavailable.

Eagles mate for life and stay hitched until death do they part! Their courtship displays are spectacular to witness, if you are lucky enough. The most visually stunning is the cartwheel display, where the potential mates fly together to a great height, lock talons and then tumble end-over-end together and break apart just before reaching the ground and then fly back up into the air.

If you have seen a bald eagle nest, they look pretty big, but how big are they really? An average size of an eagle nest is about the size of a queen mattress and weighs about a ton. The largest bald eagle nest was found in St. Petersburg, Fl and was 10 feet wide by 20 feet

deep. They typically build two nests, a primary nest and a back-up nest in case the primary nest is destroyed. They usually return to the same next year after year and both the male and female will add to it and the female will do some “renovating/redecorating”. They typically choose to build their nests near the top of tall (super canopy) trees that are within about a mile of a water source. In Wisconsin, eggs are laid from early February through early April. Clutch sizes range from one to three eggs and take an average of 35 days to hatch. Eaglets make their first flights usually about 10 to 12 weeks after hatching and fledge (leave their nests) within a few days after that first flight. The time between egg laying and fledging is approximately four months. Young birds usually remain in the area of the nest for several weeks after fledging because they are dependent on their parents for food until they disperse from the nesting territory about six weeks later. The entire breeding cycle, from the initial activity at a nest through the period of fledging dependency is about six months.

In the mid-20th century, the bald eagle population declined sharply as a result of the widespread use of DDT, a pesticide used on crops that found its way into aquatic ecosystems. In 1972, DDT was banned and in 1973 the Endangered Species Act was enacted. The bald eagle population slowly rebounded and they were taken off the Endangered Species list in 2007.

Currently, the biggest threat to the bald eagle is lead poisoning. Their number is now declining again due to lead poisoning caused by fishing and hunting gear. Lead fishing weights and lead bullets used by hunters are a significant source of lead exposure for eagles. The birds can ingest lead by

consuming the carcasses of animals that have been shot or the small pieces of fishing gear that have been left behind. Even the smallest fragment of a lead bullet can kill 1 bald eagle. So, the deer carcasses left behind containing a lead bullet that bald eagles feast on is lethal to the eagle. The accidental ingesting of lead sinkers and shots is also potentially lethal. Instead of using lead ammunition, steel or copper are good alternatives. For fishing weights, steel, tin or Tungsten are good choices.

Why are raptor centers important as opposed to songbird centers or blue-jay centers? Raptors are top predators and key indicators of the health of our ecosystem. When there is something happening in the environment that could be potentially harmful, they are one of the first indicators that something is amiss. If you have a raptor center in your area, I strongly urge you to support it through donations or volunteering.

We are fortunate to have bald eagles in our area and we should do everything we can to protect them for future generations!



Natural Connections - Bark Eaters

By Emily Stone

Naturalist/Education Director at the Cable Natural History Museum

“Who’s eating my trees?” asked a participant on a hike last week. I’d been wondering the same thing! A few weeks ago I noticed creamy colored exposed wood on several small maple trees along my driveway.

“Why do animals even eat bark?” someone else asked. Good question. Most bark is composed of tough, dead, dry cells that are not very appetizing. Those cells are made of lignin, which makes wood rigid and is very hard for digestive systems to break down. White-rot fungi and a few bacteria are the only organisms who can consume lignin using specialized enzymes. Bark also contains tannins, which are bitter tasting chemicals that can inhibit digestion.

Unappetizing outer bark is how trees protect their slightly more appealing inner bark. In a tree trunk there are several layers of different cells, including xylem and phloem. Xylem, which is dead at maturity, carries water and minerals up from the soil. Old xylem becomes what we think of as wood. The living phloem carries sugars down from the leaves. They have a layer between them called the vascular cambium, which creates new xylem and phloem cells. Cambium is made of undifferentiated cells who can become anything - like stem cells. These three layers are considered the inner bark.

The living cells of the inner bark contain complex carbohydrates, sugars, and minerals. Right now, when the maple sap is running through the xylem, the inner bark is extra sweet! Even in the dead of winter, inner bark was a source of food for the animals who can access it...and digest it.

Porcupines are one likely culprit in the decortication (bark removal) of my trees. The bottoms of their feet are hairless and covered in a pebbly texture that improves their grip. Long, curved front claws

also aid in tree climbing, along with bristles on the underside of their tail. To get at the most nutritious parts of a twig, porcupines will balance out toward the terminus of a branch and nip off its end using their self-sharpening incisors. Turning the stick around, they nibble off all the most tender twig tips and buds and then discard the rest. Sometimes you’ll see porcupine tooth marks on bigger branches, too, or even the trunk.

Hemlocks are their favorite winter food. As spring progresses, porcupines nibble on a buffet of different trees and plants, making sure to eat each one at their point of peak nutrition. Even this careful food selection wouldn’t be enough without one more adaptation: porcupines have an extremely long large intestine filled with microorganisms who produce lots of enzymes. This extended digestion allows porcupines to extract more nutrients from their food.



*With long claws and several other adaptations, porcupines are able to eat seemingly unappetizing tree bark.
Photo by Emily Stone.*

Reading about porcupine digestion made me curious about their cousins, the beavers. Now, there’s no way that a beaver could have nibbled the bark on the twigs of trees still standing along my driveway, but these two big herbivorous rodents have quite a bit in common, and some important differences. An

article in the Canadian Journal of Zoology suggests that beavers don’t chew their food quite as well as porcupines, but make up for it by having a small intestine that’s 70% longer! The porcupine has a longer colon, though, which allows them to absorb more water from their food. That makes sense, given their different habitats.

There’s one other big difference: beavers engage in coprophagy. Beavers will re-ingest their first round of poop so that they can have another go at extracting all possible nutrients.

Beavers share the trait of coprophagy with another bark eater: bunnies. Rabbits and hares have short digestive tracks, so they combine a good microbiome with coprophagy to enhance digestion. Both rabbits and hares eat their first round of soft, greenish cecal pellets, and then leave behind fecal pellets that look like M&Ms made of sawdust. This allows them to eat twigs and inner bark in the winter. Of course, they focus on the bark of small stems at the height of the snowdrifts...not in the tops of trees.

Voles also eat bark low to the ground. These little rodents like to hide in the subnivean zone under the snow and nibble on bark in relative warmth and safety. They can damage trees, even girdling and killing them. Voles have a specialized pouch called a cecum at the beginning of the large intestine that provides a place for food to be fermented. They may also use coprophagy to help absorb certain nutrients.

In comparison, deer have the most complicated gut for digesting bark and twigs. They are ruminants with four stomachs, like cows. Microorganisms in deer’s rumen break down tough materials, aided by them regurgitating and chewing their cud until it’s broken down enough to move on to the rest of the stomachs. Deer might strip bark off a young tree higher than a hare, but not high in the treetops like I’d observed.

So, who was the bark-eating culprit in the trees along my driveway? Judging by the tiny tooth marks, and my most commonly seen neighbors, they were gray

squirrels. Squirrels have sharp teeth and excellent climbing skills just like porcupines, and can venture out onto smaller branches to nibble on the most tender bark. Squirrel tooth marks are less than 2 mm wide, while porcupines’ teeth are two to three times that big.

Recent research suggests that special gut bacteria help gray squirrels extract calcium from tree bark. This adaptation might be what’s allowing gray squirrels to outcompete the native red squirrels in Great Britain, where gray squirrels were introduced. Our native red squirrels have been observed eating bark less frequently than grays, but they are smart enough to know that making a small incision in sugar maple bark this time of year releases another one of bark’s sweet secrets.

Emily’s award-winning second book, *Natural Connections: Dreaming of an Elfin Skimmer*, is available to purchase at www.cablemuseum.org/books and at your local independent bookstore, too.

For more than 50 years, the Cable Natural History Museum has served to connect you to the Northwoods. Our exhibit: “The Northwoods ROCKS!” is open through March 9. Our Winter/Spring Calendar of Events is ready for registration! Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and cablemuseum.org to see what we are up to.

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Buoys

We will be getting 2 new buoys this spring. They needed to be replaced due to damage possibly sustained by a boat or other watercraft hitting or running them over. When they got struck, they cracked and started taking on water. There is not a way to repair them, so they must be replaced. Keep your eyes open to make sure no one is causing unnecessary damage to any of them. They were very expensive to replace. It is also against the law to attach or anchor your boat to the buoys.

2024 Lake Association Cash Raffle

Since our inception, we've depended upon the generosity of our members to help us sustain our Association and advance our projects. Now in our seventeenth year, we're again promoting our Cash Raffle - the largest fund raiser we have had during the years. As in the past, we'll be attempting to sell 100 tickets for \$100 each. With payouts totaling over 50%, the Lake Association nets about \$5,000. Tickets will be available at our Spring Meeting Memorial Day weekend, or can be purchased from any board member, at Big Bear Lodge, Flambeau Forest Resort or at Moxie's. Tickets will be available up until the time of drawing, or when sold out. They must be purchased in person. The drawing this year will be held at our Fall Annual Meeting during the Labor Day weekend on Saturday August 31, 2024. Good Luck!!!



Volunteer Opportunity

Do you have an hour to spare once a summer? Do you love spending time on our lakes? Do you have an interest in science and collecting data? Are you looking for a way to teach volunteerism to the next generation?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, the Citizens Lake Monitoring Network has the perfect opportunity for you! We are looking for volunteers to collect lake data on Lake of the Pines and Connors Lake. This volunteer service can be done at your leisure. All equipment is organized and stored in the lake association shed for your convenience. The samples are easy to gather, making this a fantastic opportunity for including the next generation.

Please contact Jaime Wilson for more information: jaimewilson067@gmail.com

Bratwurst Supper

Janice Meyer, Medford, WI
3rd Place Winner in the March 2003
Taste of Home Grilling Contest

This meal-in-one grills to perfection in a heavy-duty foil bag and is ideal for camping. Loaded with chunks of bratwurst, red potatoes, mushrooms, and carrots, it's easy to season with onion soup mix, a little soy sauce and pepper.

3 lbs. uncooked bratwurst links
3 lbs. small red potatoes, cut into wedges
1 lb baby carrots
1 large red onion, sliced and separated into rings
2 jars (4 ½ oz each) whole mushrooms, drained
¼ cup butter or margarine, cubed
1 envelope onion soup mix
2 tablespoons soy sauce
½ teaspoon pepper

Cut bratwurst links into thirds. Place the bratwurst, potatoes, carrots, onion, and mushrooms in a heavy-duty foil bag (17 in X 15 in). Dot with butter. Sprinkle with soup mix, soy sauce, and pepper. Seal tightly: turn to coat.

Grill, covered, over medium heat for 45-55 minutes.

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connorspineslakeassociation.org



**Big Bear Lodge hours are:
4pm-9pm Thursday
11am-9pm Friday, Saturday, & Sunday.
Starting mid June open Monday at 4**



**Flambeau Forest Inn hours are
11:30am Wednesday through Sunday.
Winter hours Wednesday 4pm and Thursday
through Sunday 11:30am**

*Our newsletter is underwritten
in part by the Smith Family
Smith-Printing.com*



*Please submit your pictures and/or short stories to the new addition of the Newsletter! "Memory Moments at the Lake" we would like this to be all about our members sharing a short story or picture of a fond memory that you participated in at the lake.
connorspineslakeassociation.org*

"Preserving and protecting our lakes for today and for future generations."

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